

REMARKS

This is a Response to the Office Action mailed February 8, 2005. Claims 1, 7 and 9 have been amended without narrowing their scope. Claims 1-24 are pending.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 3, 5, 7-14, and 18-24. Applicant again submits that each of claims 1, 4, 6 and 15-17 also are patentable over the art of record.

It appears from page 2 of the Office action that the Examiner is objecting to, under 37 C.F.R. 1.75(d)(1), certain terminology in the claims. In particular, there appears to be an objection to the limitation that the “postal matter sorting machine ... indicates a number of unprocessed mail items *received and assigned to* said postal information input apparatus.” It is believed clear from the original specification that unprocessed mail items are assigned to the postal input apparatus of the present invention. However, to expedite prosecution, the wording of various ones of the claims has been changed now to read “received by said postal information apparatus.” This is believed clearly to have antecedent basis by the example of two “received” unprocessed data at page 5, lines 13-15. The above amendments to the claims do not narrow the scope of the claims.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 4, 6 and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,632,252 (Haruki et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,333,791 (Okimoto et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Among the limitations of claim 1 which are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record is the requirement that the display “indicates a number of unprocessed mail items received by said postal information input apparatus.”

Haruki is silent about providing an indication on a display of a “number of unprocessed mail items received and assigned to said postal information input apparatus.” In the Response

to Amendment section of the Office Action, at page 2, the Examiner seems to be taking the position that the displaying of the rejected image discussed at col. teaches this feature. However, there is no indication that any information indicative of the number of unrecognized items is ever displayed. Only one image is ever mentioned as being displayed. See col.2, lines 4-24; col. 3, line 63 to col. 4, line 8.

Further, the tally of previous rejections is *not* taught as being displayed. Instead this tally is kept in the control tables. Col. 2, lines 9-13. The Office Action has combined Haruki with Okimoto also to read on this limitation of claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that Okimoto may not be combined with Haruki.

Okimoto relates to a system that allows *e-mails received over the Internet* to be printed. The system allows, among other things, a user at a receiving end to control printing of e-mails designated for printing by the sender. As is very clear from the disclosure of the Okimoto, that reference is directed exclusively to e-mail processing. Okimoto does not relate in any way to systems for sorting or processing received physical mail. Although the word mail is often used in Okimoto, even a cursory review of the context makes it very clear that this is simply an abbreviation of e-mail in this context.

Furthermore, a postal matter sorting system that scans mail items and recognizes indicia on the mail item in order to sort mail items completely differs from a system for directing electronic mails for printing. For example, Okimoto does not provide any teachings or suggestions with respect to errors in optical character recognition of indicia on mail pieces, and the rectification of such errors through operator input on a postal information input apparatus. This is because no such issues exist in e-mail processing, which is a completely unrelated field to the field of optically processing and sorting received physical mail.

In view of the fact that processing of e-mail is completely unrelated technically to the processing of incoming paper mail items, one of skill in the art would have absolutely no

motivation to combine the teachings of a electronic mail print control system with those of a postal matter sorting system because each of these systems differ completely in function and operation and are in completely different technical fields.

In view of the above, one of skill in the art would have no motivation to combine the teachings of Okimoto with Haruki because Okimoto does not concern sorting mail pieces and in fact does not concern mail at all, in the sense “mail” is used in Haruki. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is patentably distinguished over the cited references. Since all of the other claims were rejected based upon this same improper combination, those rejections are clearly improper as well.

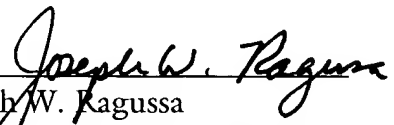
Among the limitations of independent claim 15 which are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record is the requirement that the data display method provides an “indication of the number of rejected mail items associated with the information received by the input apparatus requiring operator input.” As argued above, because Haruki and Okimoto fail to teach or suggest providing an indication of the quantity of rejected physical mail items to the operator, and because one of skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the teachings of Haruki and Okimoto, claim 15 is also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 4, 6, 16 and 17 depend from claims 1 and 15 respectively, and include all the limitations found therein. These claims include further limitations which, in combination with the limitations of claims 1 and 15, are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record, as was set forth in the prior response.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of all the claims are earnestly solicited.

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